



Auditor of Public Accounts
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Auditor Edelen Marks First-Ever Effort by a Kentucky Auditor to Examine
Education Spending**

*More Than a Dozen Special Exams Find Similar Concerns; Work has Already Led to Improvements in
School District Governance and Accountability*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (October 14, 2013) – Auditor Adam Edelen on Monday told a legislative committee that a lack of accountability and transparency are among the common themes in 14 school district special examinations his office has conducted in the past year.

The examinations mark the first-ever meaningful entry by the Auditor's office into the education space, Auditor Edelen told the Interim Joint Committee on Education.

"If we fail to educate our kids, we will never deliver on the kind of progress Kentucky should be destined for," Auditor Edelen told the committee. "My number one focus is making sure our limited resources are making their way to the classroom rather than supporting central offices and bureaucracies that may have become bloated."



Since last fall, the Auditor's office has conducted 14 special exams in the following school districts: Kenton, Breathitt, Mason, Dayton Independent, Webster, Pike, Ashland Independent, Carroll, Metcalfe, Fayette, Menifee, Letcher, Montgomery and Martin.

An examination at Jefferson County Public Schools is underway.

Some of the special exam findings have been more egregious than others. In Dayton Independent, the Auditor's office found the former superintendent received nearly \$224,000 in unauthorized payments in a district in which 90 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

In Mason County, the Auditor's office found nearly \$200,000 worth of questionable expenditures, excessive benefits for the superintendent and lack of proper board oversight.

Some of the other exams found a lack of oversight by school boards, a lack of transparency and disclosure to boards and taxpayers, and expenses that weren't reasonable or lacked supporting documentation. Superintendent contracts and benefits have been of particular concern in several districts.

Auditor Edelen noted that while some of his exams have found expensive dinners and travel by administrators, teachers and parents are covering more classroom expenses. Some teachers are spending as much as \$2,000-\$3,000 a year on supplies while back-to-school lists can cost parents \$100 or more per child.

"I think you can understand my outrage as the taxpayer watchdog and the people of Kentucky's moral outrage," Auditor Edelen said.

Auditor Edelen said the work of the Auditor's office is already making a difference. Dozens of school board members and school district administrators have reached out to the Auditor's office for help in their districts.

The Kentucky Department of Education accepted Auditor Edelen's recommendations last spring to require school districts to submit superintendent contracts to be posted on a publicly-accessible website. Auditor Edelen also has expressed his support for the Department's plans to strengthen board ethics, financial and superintendent evaluation training, as well as to require minimum standards for school district finance officers.

"Some of the exams have clearly identified bad apples, but they are the minority," Auditor Edelen said. "Most school board members and district administrators have used our recommendations as tools for improvement."

Results of the school district examinations can be found on the Auditor's website.

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